REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Applicant extends gratitude to the Examiner for a telephone interview granted January 30, 2004, to discuss the Final Action issued against the above-identified patent application. As requested during the interview, Applicants set out below a brief explanation of the invention.

A distributed switch call manager (DSCM) is a centralized switch fabric control module that is adapted to control two or more service switching points having decommissioned control modules. The distributed switch call manager was invented by the Assignee in order to provide a more economical solution to service switching point management. As is understood by those skilled in the art, maintaining a service switching point requires highly skilled professionals to maintain software and hardware components of the respective control modules. Because every control module requires a translation table to terminate or originate any call, a great deal of time and effort is required to maintain translation tables in the respective call modules. In addition, feature upgrades and other software changes require the time of skilled professionals. When many control modules are involved, the time, including travel time is accordingly increased. The distributed switch shown in FIG. 2 of this application is Assignee's response to the need for an economic solution to extend the life of incumbent time division multiplexed switching equipment. The Assignee developed the distributed switch call manager, which replaces the control modules of a plurality of service switching points, and also permits broadband telephone service provision by the additional of line gateways that connect directly to the broadband transport network and are directly controlled by the DSCM.

Subsequent to the invention of the DSCM, Applicants invented the instant method of local number portability.

As is well understood by those skilled in the art, there have been many proposed solutions for local number portability in the prior art. The most

widely-accepted and currently widely-deployed method of local number portability is that referred to by Kung et al., which involves use of a service control point (SCP) to provide ported number routing information. When a service switching point (SSP) supports a ported number, the translation table in the SSP is flagged to indicate that the number is ported. When an inbound call arrives for a ported number, a query is made to the SCP to obtain routing instructions for the call. The SCP translates the ported number and returns routing instructions, normally a switch and equipment number. The switch and equipment number is used by the SSP to forward the call to another SSP that saves the ported number. As is well understood by those skilled in the art, this is inefficient because it requires extra signaling (SCP queries) as well as extra trunking (redundant trunking resulting from routing through the SSP that originally served the ported number).

Both inefficiencies are eliminated by the instant invention. In accordance with the instant invention, numbers can be ported within a local area served by one or more DSCMs by simply re-provisioning the translation tables of the DSCM to point to the new location of the ported number. This simple solution not only enables elegant local number portability, it also enables instant call feature portability without a requirement for changing subscriber profiles or interrupting subscriber service. The advantages achieved by the instant invention are unparalleled by any other solution for local number portability known to Applicants.

Claim Rejections -35 USC § 102

The Office Action rejected claims 1-3 under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by United States Patent No. 6,252,952 to Kung et al.

As discussed with the Examiner, during the interview of January 30, 2004 Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection under 35 U.S.C. 102 is unfounded. However, to ensure that all essential steps in the method for local number portability are claimed, claims 1 and 2 are cancelled and claim 3 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of cancelled claims 1 and 2. Amended

claim 3 therefore claims a method of porting a directory number within a local telephone service area served by a distributed switch call manager by selecting at least one of a media gateway and a line gateway through which to serve the directory number; re-provisioning the distributed switch call manager to address call control messages associated with the ported directory number to the at least one of the media gateway and the line gateway by changing a number translation table in the DSCM to associate the ported directory number with a signaling path to the at least one of the media gateway and the line gateway.

Kung et al. fail to teach or suggest any such method and, in view of the explanation set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that no further question of anticipation should exist.

The prior local number portability method adopted by Kung et al. requires that the number translation table in the SSP be changed to flag the number as a ported number. The flag, as explained above, causes a query to an LNP database (see steps 511, 512 of FIG. 5 and 610, 611 of FIG. 6). This teaches directly away from the invention claimed in amended claim 3, and the rejection of claims 103 under 35 U.S.C. 102 is traversed.

Claim Rejection -35 U.S.C. § 103

The Office Action rejects claims 4-7, 11-13 and 14-17 under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being obvious in view of Kung et al.

Claims 8-10 are not addressed and the status of those claims is uncertain. However, for consistency, claim 8 is cancelled and the subject matter thereof incorporated in amended claim 9.

For reasons set forth above with respect to claims 1-3 it is respectfully established that claims 4-7 and amended claim 9 are not obvious in view of Kung et al., because Kung et al. teach directly away from the method claimed.

With respect to claims 11-13, the same argument also applies.

With respect to claims 14-17, claim 14 is cancelled and claim 15 is amended to incorporate the subject matter of claim 14, so that the scope of

claims 15-17 corresponds to the scope of claim 1 in that the steps of establishing signaling paths through the broadband transport network between the distributed switch control module and the media gateways of the respective central offices are positively recited, as well as provisioning the distributed switch control module with a number translation table used to select signaling paths through which call control messages are transmitted for ported directory numbers.

In view of the explanation set forth above and in view of the amendments to the claims, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. It is therefore respectfully requested that the finality of the Office Action be withdrawn and that the patentability of the amended claims be reconsidered.

Respectfully submitted,
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